

**The American Veteran
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Fisher House

MENTION VETERANS BENEFITS AND MOST PEOPLE THINK OF HEALTHCARE. THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION OPERATES 157 MEDICAL CENTERS AND OVER 800 OUTPATIENT CLINICS AROUND THE COUNTRY -ONE OF THE LARGEST INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS OF THE WORLD.

VA CAREGIVERS KNOW THAT HAVING LOVED ONES NEAR IS POWERFUL MEDICINE FOR THE SICK AND INJURED.

THE FISHER HOUSE FOUNDATION MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS TO STAY CLOSE TO AILING RELATIVES BEING TREATED AT VA MEDICAL FACILITIES.

THERE ARE FISHER HOUSES NEAR SIX MEDICAL CENTERS.

DANIELLE TAKES US INSIDE THIS HOME AWAY FROM HOME.

>> IF YOUR LOVED ONE IS IN THE HOSPITAL FAR AWAY FROM HOME, FISHER HOUSE FAMILIES SAY THIS IS WHERE YOU WANT TO BE.

WITH SOMEONE LIKE KERRY BY YOUR SIDE.

>> TO BE A MANAGER OF A FISHER HOUSE IS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE EACH AND EVERY DAY, TO WATCH THE TRAUMAS THAT PEOPLE GO THROUGH AND TO HELP THEM WITH ANYTHING THAT THEY MAY NEED, TO BECOME THEIR FRIEND.

IT'S AN OVERWHELMING EXPERIENCE AND IT BECOMES PART OF YOUR LIFE.

>> IT'S A WARM PLACE TO STAY WHILE BEING CLOSE TO YOUR VETERAN DURING ILLNESS, DISEASE OR INJURY.

YOU'LL NOTICE THIS FISHER HOUSE LOOKS MORE LIKE A HOME

THAN A HOTEL.

THE FOUNDATION LIKES IT THAT WAY.

IT'S SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE A MORE INTIMATE WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT.

>> MY OLD MAN'S GOT LUNG CANCER AND HE'S TAKING CHEMO AND RADIATION.

TO ME, THE FISHER HOUSE IS JUST A HOME AWAY FROM HOME.

YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU NEED A PLACE TO STAY, IT'S HERE.

IT'S GOT MOSTLY ALL THE CONVENIENCES OF HOME.

YOU'VE GOT YOUR KITCHEN, YOU CAN COOK.

>> Reporter: IN THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN WHERE DONATED FOOD OFTEN FILLS THE PANTRY.

>> SAVES A LOT OF MONEY WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE IT.

>> WE COULDN'T AFFORD TO EAT AT \$80 A NIGHT.

IT'S THAT SIMPLE.

>>Reporter: THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF SUPPORTERS SHE CAN SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH HER HUSBAND WHO'S RECOVERING FROM SURGERY, JUST A QUICK WALK ACROSS THE STREET INSTEAD OF DRIVING THREE HOURS EACH WAY TO VISIT.

NO HASSLE, JUST THE SUPPORT FROM VA.

>> THE STAFF, THEY GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE PART OF THE FAMILY TOO.

>> WE JUST TELL THEM, IF YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION, THAT'S FINE, BUT IF YOU CAN'T, WE LOVE TO HAVE YOU HERE.

>>Reporter: SO A WELCOME MAT LAID OUT FOR VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND CARETAKERS SINCE THE CINCINNATI FISHER HOUSE OPENED IN 2001.

IT STARTED OUT AS A GRASS ROOTS PROJECT SPEARHEADED BY JACK NICKERS.

>> WHEN I SAW THE NEEDS OF THE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES I WAS VERY DEEPLY TOUCHED BY THAT AND WANTED TO DO EVERYTHING I COULD TO HELP, YOU KNOW, MAKE THEIR LIVES A LITTLE EASIER.

>>Reporter: HIS VISION CAME TO LIFE WHEN HE AND HIS FELLOW PARTNERS MET WITH THE FISHER HOUSE FOUNDATION.

>> WE DECIDED TO JOIN FORCES.

>> Reporter: THE FOUNDATION HAD BEEN DONATING COMFORT HOMES TO VA AND TO MILITARY MEDICAL CENTERS SINCE ZACHARY AND ELIZABETH FISHER STARTED THE PROGRAM IN 1990.

IT CAME TIME FOR CINCINNATI'S TURN.

>> WE'RE THE ONLY FISHER HOUSE THAT WE RAISED, IF NOT ALL OF THE MONEY, VERY CLOSE TO ALL THE MONEY TO BUILD THIS PARTICULAR FACILITY AND ALSO BUILD SOME ADDITIONAL PARKING.

>>Reporter: THE CINCINNATI FISHER HOUSE IS THE LARGEST FISHER HOUSE TO DATE, BUT SIZE IS RELATIVE.

THERE ARE JUST SIXTEEN ROOMS.

>> IF I COULD FIT EVERYONE IN HERE, I WOULD NEED A 500 ROOM HOUSE, EACH AND EVERY DAY.

>> Reporter: BUT EVEN WITH 16 ROOMS, THE FISHER HOUSE MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE MEDICAL CARE PROVIDED BY VA DOCTORS AND NURSES.

>> THEY LOVE IT.

THEY LOVE HAVING A PLACE WHERE THE PATIENTS ARE CLOSE

AND WE CAN PROVIDE BETTER QUALITY, TIMELY CARE IF THE
PATIENT HAS IMMEDIATE READY ACCESS, AND THE FISHER HOUSE
PROVIDES THAT.

>> WHEN YOU LOOK AROUND YOU SEE YOUR FREEDOM.
YOU SEE EVERYTHING THAT YOU HAVE BECAUSE OF OUR
VETERANS.

IT'S -- IT'S AN AMAZING THING.

>> I SHOULD BE PAYING THEM.

IT'S SUCH A JOY TO BE HERE.

I GET UP IN THE MORNING KNOWING I -- I'VE GOT A PLACE TO
GO AND THEY NEED ME.

THAT'S GOOD TO FEEL NEEDED.

>> I COULDN'T ASK FOR A BETTER JOB OR A BETTER PLACE TO
WORK.

I HOPE THAT EACH AND EVERY VA GETS ONE.

>> THE FOUNDATION PLANS TO BUILD ONE NEW VA FISHER HOUSE
EACH YEAR.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION OR FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT THE FISHER HOUSE FOUNDATION, GO TO
FISHERHOUSE.ORG.